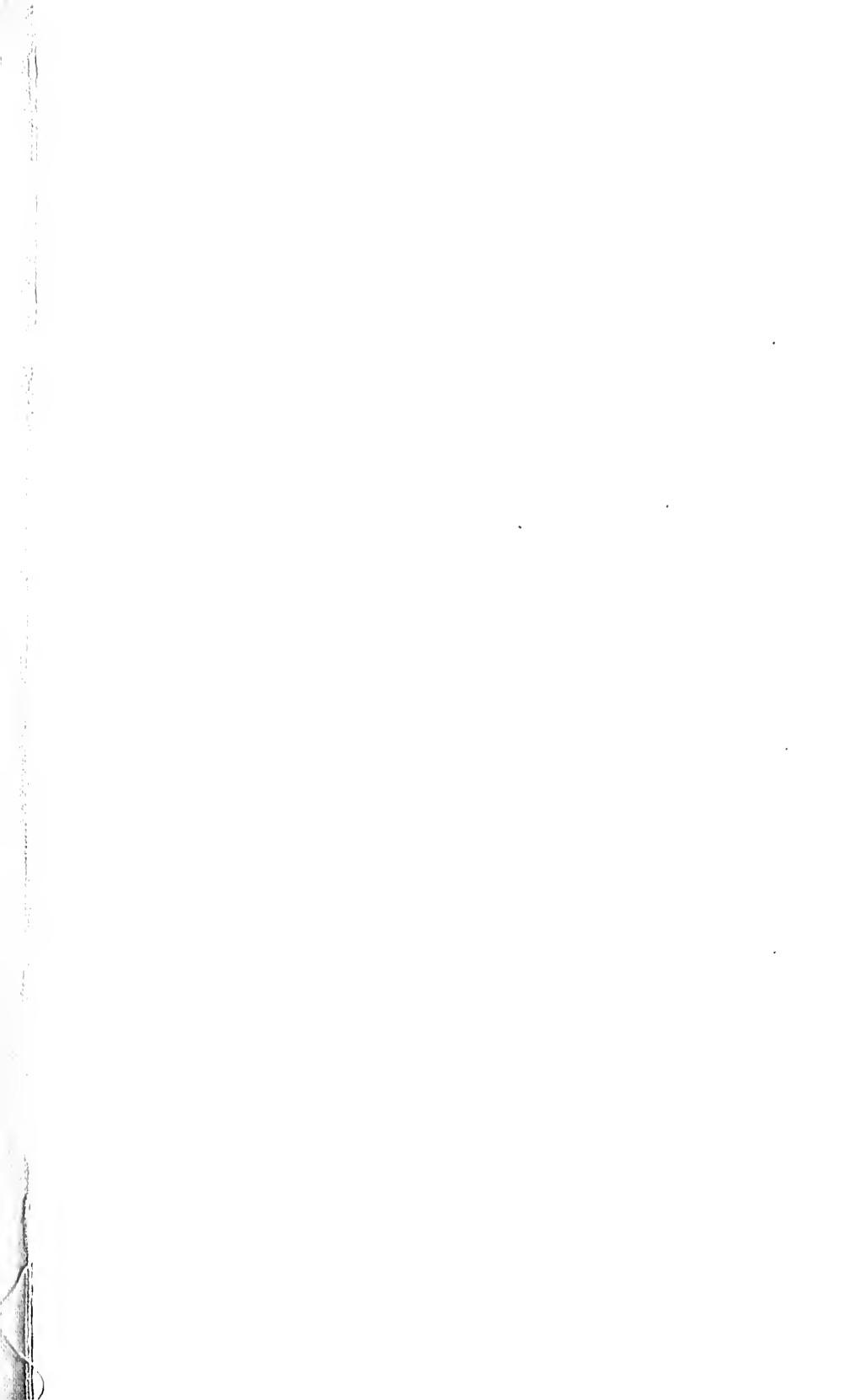


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IV

JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN THOMAS MORRIS, OF HIS MAJESTY'S
XVII REGIMENT OF INFANTRY; DETROIT, SEPTEMBER
25, 1764

Reprint from the author's *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*
(London, 1791), pp. 1-39

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The journal of Captain Thomas Morris is notable from two points of view. First, because of its rarity — the volume in which it is found, *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (London, printed for James Ridgway, 1791), being a treasure much prized by the collector of valuable Americana. In the second place, the journal is of importance to historical students because of the light it throws upon conditions in the West at this critical moment (1766), and the proof it furnishes that Pontiac's influence was still paramount among the Western Indians, that Bradstreet had been completely duped, and that native hostility to British sovereignty over the Western tribes was deep-seated, and would take many years wholly to uproot.

Incidentally, also, the journal possesses considerable dramatic interest. Dealing with a single episode, told in the first person by the chief participant, and he a person of literary tastes, the thrilling incidents — repeated escapes from torture and death, the flight through the woods, and the final refuge at Detroit — all depicted graphically, yet simply, hold one's attention unflagging to the end. The side touches are in keeping with the principal incidents: the contrast between the author's situation and his calm enjoyment of Shakespeare's tragedy, so curiously preserved for him from the loot of some English officer's baggage; the appearance of the white charger that had borne its master Braddock to sudden death in the Monongahela Valley nine years before; the

gratitude and fidelity of the Canadian Godefroy, evinced to so good a purpose; the pomp and pride of the red-coated brave who wore on his back his reward for services to Sir William Johnson; the honor of Pontiac and the Miami chief, who protected with difficulty the sacred person of an ambassador; the rougery of the Loretto Indian, who deserted his chief and so speedily suffered therefor — all these circumstances heighten and prolong the reader's interest, and add vividness to the narrative.

Our knowledge of the author's life is but slight. He came of a race of soldiers, his father and grandfather before him having served as captains of the same regiment in which he was an officer. His early education was considerable; and fifteen months had been spent in Paris familiarizing himself with the language and literature of its people. His tastes were always those of a scholar and a lover of literature; he being of that class of British soldiers of which Wolfe was so conspicuous an example, whose recreations took the line of literary appreciation and performance. Morris came to America in 1758, as a lieutenant in the 17th regiment of infantry, in which he had been commissioned three years previous. Although this was Forbes's command, Morris saw service at Louisburg in 1758, and was with Amherst in the campaign around Lake Champlain in the following year. In 1761, he was promoted to a captaincy and assigned to the garrison of Fort Hendrick, at Canajoharie in the Mohawk Valley — the home of the famous Mohawk chiefs, Hendricks and Brant. It was doubtless there that he acquired that knowledge of the Mohawk temperament which he exhibits in the opening pages of his journal. While stationed at this lonely outpost he addressed his friend "Dicky"

Montgomery in a parody of one of Horace's odes, which possesses more historical interest than literary merit.¹ It is evident from his dedication of certain odes to "ceux des Français, qui ont connu l'auteur au siège de la Martinique," that Morris accompanied General Monckton upon that expedition in 1762.

After his adventures along the Maumee, related in the present journal, he remained at Detroit for some time, and returned to England with his regiment in 1767. At this time occurred his meeting with the soldier whom he had previously encountered as an Indian prisoner, under circumstances of great danger and distress, near the treacherously-destroyed Fort Miami.

What we know of Morris's later life is comprised in his "Preamble" to the volume containing this journal. Having retired from the army in 1775, he lost his property by means of speculative ventures. For the sake of his children, he appealed to the king for a pension, on the ground of past services, especially those detailed in the Maumee journal. A copy of the journal was annexed to the petition, but the latter failed of effect. The narrative here reprinted was laid aside until encouragement from a "respectable gentleman of my acquaintance, a man of letters in whose judgment I place implicit faith" determined him to print some of his literary efforts and to include the journal to "complete the volume." He expresses the hope that the recital of his adventures "might possibly, some time or other, procure a friend or protector to one of my children." "This is a plain and simple tale," he concludes, "accounting for my presumption in offering to the public an old story relating to one whose wish used to be, to lie concealed in domestic

¹ Simms, *Frontiersmen of New York* (Albany, 1882), i, pp. 438, 439.

life; a wish, in which he has been amply gratified by the very obliging silence of some of his nearest connexions.”

It is evident, therefore, that the journal, unlike most of the others we publish in this volume, was dressed up for publication, and purposely given a dramatic turn. The official report of the expedition, as sent to Bradstreet, together with letters from Morris to his superior, are in the British Public Record Office, still unpublished.²

The small volume of *Miscellanies*, from which we extract the journal, contains in addition thereto an essay on dramatic art, translations of two of Juvenal’s satires, and five odes which are accompanied by transliterations into French prose. Morris had already published two collections of songs—in 1786, and in 1790. In 1792, appeared his *Life of Reverend David Williams*; and four years later a versified tale, *Quashy, or the Coal Black Maid*, which has been described as “a negroe love story which bears reference to the slave-trade, and is here but indifferently told.”³ With the publication in 1802, of *Songs, Political and Convivial*, Captain Thomas Morris passes from public view.

The character of the man throws the incidents of this hazardous journey into still stronger relief. Here is no frontiersman like Weiser and Croghan, familiar with the hardships of the wilderness; no missionary, like Post, seeking rewards not measured by earthly laurels and success; not even a bluff, practical soldier like Bradstreet, who dispatched him on his venturesome mission. Morris was a man of the great world, a fashionable dilettante, dabbling in literature and the dramatic art.

² Parkman, *Conspiracy of Pontiac*, ii, p. 195.

³ *Monthly Review*, March, 1797, p. 381.

Parkman comments on his round English face — as shown in the portrait which appears on the frontispiece to his *Miscellanies*, and which we republish as frontispiece to the present volume — and the lack of resolution and courage therein expressed. Yet upon his memorable embassy he displayed no want of either. Probably it was his familiarity with the French language that led to his being chosen for the task; he entered upon it with commendable zeal, and attempted to carry out his orders at every risk.

Doubtless the adventure appealed to that latent fondness for experiences, that men of the literary temperament frequently possess. In his essay on dramatic art he says, "If the world ever afforded me a pleasure equal to that of reading Shakespear at the foot of a water-fall in an American desert, it was Du Menil's performance of tragedy." Morris evinced a steadiness of courage, endurance, and hardihood, fortitude under disaster, and an unflinching determination to do his duty, as well as a power of attaching men to his service, that would do credit to any man. For a victim of Indian cruelties, his magnanimity was a still rarer quality. He bore no grudge against his savage tormentors, speaking of them as "an innocent, much-abused, and once happy people." His appreciation of the qualities of the French Canadians, and his remarks upon their conduct of Indian affairs show keen observation, astuteness, and a judgment free from prejudice. As an author, wit, man of affairs, courageous soldier, magnanimous foe, we may apply to him in earnest the epithet levied in jest by the reviewer of his first volume of songs — the "inimitable Captain Morris."

R. G. T.

JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN THOMAS MORRIS OF HIS MAJESTY'S XVII REGIMENT OF INFANTRY

General Bradstreet, who commanded an army sent against those Indian nations who had cut off several English garrisons, of which we had taken possession after the surrender of Canada, having too hastily determined to send an officer to take possession also of the Illinois country in his Britannic Majesty's name, sent his Aid de Camp to found me on the occasion. His Aid de Camp desired me to recommend some officer with qualities he described. I named every one that I could recollect; but he always answered me shortly: "No, no; he won't do." I then began to suspect that he might have a design on myself. Accordingly I said: "If I thought my services would be acceptable"— He interrupted me: "That is what is wanted." I replied: "Why did you not say so at first?" He said, with an oath: "It is not a thing to be asked of any man." I answered: "If the General thinks me the properest person, I am ready." I was immediately conducted to the General; and while I was at dinner with him, he said, in his frank manner: "Morris, I have a French fellow here, my prisoner, who expects to be hanged for treason; he speaks all the Indian languages, and if you think he can be of use to you, I'll send for him, pardon him, and send him with you." I answered: "I am glad you have thought of it, Sir; I wish you would." The prisoner, whose name was

Godefroi,⁴ was accordingly fent for; and, as foon as he entered the tent, he turned pale, and fell on his knees, begging for mercy. The General telling him that it was in his power to hang him, concluded with faying: “I give thee thy life; take care of this gentleman.” The man exprefsed a grateful fenfe of the mercy shewn him, and protested that he would be faithful: and indeed his behaviour afterwards proved that he was sincere in his promise. As General Bradstreet had pardoned him on my account, he confidered me as his deliverer. Little minds hate obligations; and thence the tranfition is eaſy to the hatred of their benefactor: this man’s foul was of another make, and, though in a low ftation, a noble pride urged him to throw a heavier weight of obligation on him to whom he thought he was indebted for his liberty, if not his life; and I had the singular ſatisfaction of owing thoſe bleffings to one who fancied he owed the fame to me.

While I was preparing to fet out, the boats being almoſt loaden with our provifions and necefſaries, the Aid de Camp told me, that if the Indian deputies, who were expected to arrive at the camp that evening, did not come, the Uttawaw [Ottawa] village,⁵ where I was to lie that night, would be attacked at three o’clock in the morning;

⁴ Jacques Godefroy was a prominent habitant of Detroit, who had been employed by Major Gladwin to seek an interview with Pontiac on behalf of the English cause. From this mission he had returned unsuccessful. Later, dispatched to the Illinois with four other Canadians, they had not only pillaged an English trader, but aided the Indians to capture Fort Miami. As Godefroy had taken the oath of allegiance to the British crown in 1760, he was arrested and ſentenced to be hanged on the charge of treason. After this journey with Morris he continued to live at Detroit, much respected and esteemed, and one of the richest of the French colony. His ſon leaned toward the American ſide in the Revolution, and assisted George Rogers Clark.—ED.

⁵ This was Pontiac’s village on the Maumee. See Croghan’s Journal of 1765, *ante*.—ED.

"but that," added he, "will make no difference in your affairs." I was aftenished that the General could think so: but I made no reply to him, and we talked of other matters. However, as I was stepping into my boat, some canoes appeared, and I came on shore again, and found they were the Indian deputies who were expected. This I thought a very happy incident for me; and having received proper powers and instructions I set out in good spirits from Cedar Point,⁶ in Lake Erie, on the 26th of August, 1764, about four o'clock in the afternoon, at the same time that the army proceeded for Detroit. My escourt consisted of Godefroi, and another Canadian, two servants, twelve Indians, our allies, and five Mohawks, with a boat in which were our provifions, who were to attend us to the swifts of the Miamis river, about ten leagues distant, and then return to the army. I had with me likewise Warfong, the great Chippawaw chief, and Attawang, an Uttawaw chief, with some other Indians of their nations, who had come the same day to our camp with propofals of peace. We lay that night at the mouth of the Miamis river.

I was greatly delighted on obferving the difference of temper betwixt these Indian strangers and thoſe of my old acquaintance of the five nations. Godefroi was employed in interpreting to me all their pleafantries; and I thought them the moft agreeable ralliers I had ever met with. As all men love thoſe who reſemble themſelves, the ſprightly manners of the French cannot fail to recommend them to theſe ſavages, as our grave deportment is an advantage to us among our Indian neighbors; for it is certain that a reſerved Englishman diſfers not more from a lively Frenchman than does a ſtern Mohawk

⁶ Cedar Point was near the entrance to the Maumee River.—ED.

from a laughing Chippawaw. The next day (27th) we arrived at the Swifts,⁷ fix leagues from the mouth of the river, and the Uttawaw chief sent to his village for horses. Soon after a party of young Indians came to us on horseback, and the two Canadians and myself having mounted, we proceeded, together with the twelve Indians my escort, who were on foot, and marched in the front, the chief carrying English colours, towards the village, which was two leagues and a half distant. On our approaching it, I was astonished to see a great number of white flags flying; and, passing by the encampment of the Miamis, while I was admiring the regularity and contrivance of it, I heard a yell, and found myself surrounded by Pontiac's army, consisting of six hundred savages, with tomahawks in their hands, who beat my horse, and endeavoured to separate me from my Indians, at the head of whom I had placed myself on our discovering the village. By their malicious smiles, it was easy for me to guess their intention of putting me to death. They led me up to a person, who stood advanced before two slaves (prisoners of the Panis nation, taken in war and kept in slavery⁸) who had arms, himself holding a fusil with the butt on the ground. By his dress, and the air he assumed, he appeared to be a French officer: I afterwards found that he was a native of old France, had been long in the regular troops as a drummer, and that his war-name was St. Vincent. This fine dressed half French, half Indian figure desired me to dismount; a bear-skin was spread on the ground, and St. Vincent and I sat upon it, the whole Indian army, circle within circle,

⁷ See note on Maumee Rapids, Croghan's *Journals*, ante.—ED.

⁸ On Indian slavery, see "The Panis; Canadian Indian Slavery," in Canadian Institute *Proceedings*, 1897.—ED

standing round us. Godefroi sat at a little distance from us; and presently came Pontiac, and squatted himself, after his fashion, opposite to me. This Indian has a more extensive power than ever was known among that people; for every chief used to command his own tribe: but eighteen nations, by French intrigue, had been brought to unite, and chose this man for their commander, after the English had conquered Canada; having been taught to believe that, aided by France, they might make a vigorous push and drive us out of North America. Pontiac asked me in his language, which Godefroi interpreted, "whether I was come to tell lies, like the rest of my countrymen." He said, "That Ononteo (the French king) was not crushed as the English had reported, but had got upon his legs again," and presented me a letter from New Orleans, directed to him, written in French, full of the most improbable falsehoods, though beginning with a truth. The writer mentioned the repulse of the English troops in the Mississippi, who were going to take possession of Fort Chartres,⁹ blamed the Natchez nation for their ill conduct in that affair, made our loss in that attack to be very considerable, and concluded with assuring him, that a French army was landed in Louisiana, and that his father (the French king) would drive the English out of the country. I began to reason with him; but St. Vincent hurried me away to his cabin; where, when he talked to me of the French army, I asked him if he thought me fool enough to give credit to that account; and told him that none but

⁹ The reference here is to the defeat and retreat of Major Arthur Loftus, who left Pensacola early in February, 1764, with a detachment of the 22nd infantry to proceed to the Illinois, and take possession for the English. On the nineteenth of March he was ambushed and fired upon near Tunica Bend on the Mississippi, and obliged to retreat to New Orleans.—ED.

the simple Indians could be so credulous. Attawang, the Uttawaw chief, came to seek me, and carried me to his cabin. The next day (28th) I went to the grand council, and addressed the chiefs. When I mentioned that their father, the king of France, had ceded those countries to their brother the king of England, (for so the two kings are called by the Indians) the great Miamis chief started up and spoke very loud, in his singular language, and laughed. Godefroi whispered me, that it was very lucky that he received my intelligence with contempt and not anger, and desired me to say no more, but sit down, and let my chief speak; accordingly I sat down, and he produced his belts, and spoke. I have called the Miamis tongue a singular language; because it has no affinity in its sound with any other Indian language which I have heard. It is much wondered whence this nation came; who differ as much from all the other nations in their superstitious practices, as in their speech, and manner of encamping.¹⁰ As they left the Uttawaw villages before me on their way home, we traced their encampments, where we saw their offerings of tobacco, made by every individual each morning, ranged in the neatest order, on long slips of bark both on the shore, and on rocks in the river. They carry their God in a bag, which is hung in the front of their encampment, and is visited by none but the priest; if any other person presumes to advance between the front of the encampment and that spirit in the bag, he is put to death: and I was told that a drunken French soldier, who had done so, was with great difficulty saved. When the council was

¹⁰ The Miamis were of Algonquian stock; but the early French writers noted their peculiarities and special customs. See *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, xvi, p. 376; also index thereto.—ED.

over, St. Vincent changed his note, and told me that if I could ensure to him his pardon, he would go to Detroit. I answered him, "that it was not in my power to promise it." However, as I found that I could not well do without him, I contrived to make him my friend. Pontiac said to my chief: "If you have made peace with the English, we have no businefs to make war on them. The war-belts came from you." He afterwards said to Godefroi: "I will lead the nations to war no more; let 'em be at peace, if they chuse it: but I myself will never be a friend to the English. I shall now become a wanderer in the woods; and if they come to seek me there, while I have an arrow left, I will shoot at them." This I imagined he said in despair, and gave it as my opinion, that he might easily be won to our interest; and it afterwards proved so. He made a speech to the chiefs, who wanted to put me to death, which does him honour; and shews that he was acquainted with the law of nations: "We must not," said he, "kill ambaffadors: do we not send them to the Flat-heads, our greatest enemies,¹¹ and they to us? Yet these are always treated with hosptiality." The following day (29th) the Mohawk, who commanded the Indians in the provifion-boat, stole away, without taking my letter to General Bradstreet, as he had been ordered, having, the night before, robbed us of almost every thing, and sold my rum (two barrels) to the Utta-waws. The greater part of the warriors got drunk; and a young Indian drew his knife, and made a stroke at me; but Godefroi feized his arm, threw him down, and took the knife from him. He certainly saved my life, for I

¹¹ The Northern tribes, especially the Iroquois, termed the Cherokees, Chickasaws, etc., "Têtes plattes" (Flat-heads). The enmity between the Northern and the Southern Indians was traditional.—ED.

was fitting, and could not have avoided the blow though I saw it coming. I was now concealed under my matress, as all the young Indians were determined to murder me, was afterwards obliged to put on Indian shoes and cover myself with a blanket to look like a savage, and escape by fording the river into a field of Indian corn with St. Vincent, Godefroi, and the other Canadian. Pontiac asked Godefroi, who returned to the village to see what was going on, "what he had done with the English man." And being told, he said, "you have done well." Attawang came to see me, and made his two sons guard me. Two Kickapoo chiefs came to me, and spoke kindly, telling me that they had not been at war with the English for seven years. Two Miamis came likewise, and told me that I need not be afraid to go to their village. A Huron woman however abused me because the English had killed her son. Late at night I returned to Attawang's cabin, where I found my servant concealed under a blanket, the Indians having attempted to murder him; but they had been prevented by St. Vincent. There was an alarm in the night, a drunken Indian having been seen at the skirt of the wood. One of the Delaware nation, who happened to be with Pontiac's army, passing by the cabin where I lay, called out in broken English: "D — d son of a b — ch." All this while I saw none of my own Indians: I believe their situation was almost as perilous as my own. The following day (30th) the Miamis and Kickapoos set out on their return home, as provisions were growing scarce. An Indian called the little chief, told Godefroi that he would send his son with me, and made me a present of a volume of Shakespeare's plays; a singular gift from a savage. He however begged a little gunpowder in return, a commodity to him much

more precious than diamonds. The next day (31st) I gave Attawang, who was going to Detroit, a letter for General Bradstreet,¹² and to one of my servants whom I sent along with this chief, I gave another for his Aid de Camp. And now, having purchased three horses and hired two canoes to carry our little baggage, I set out once more, having obtained Pontiac's consent, for the Illinois country, with my twelve Indians, the two Canadians, St. Vincent's two slaves, and the little chief's son and nephew. There was scarcely any water in the channel of the river, owing to the great drought, so that the canoes could hardly be dragged along empty in some places. We passed by the island where is Pontiac's village, and arrived at a little village consisting of only two pretty large cabins, and three small ones, and here we encamped: that is, we lay on the ground; and as a distinguished personage, I was honoured by having a few small branches under me, and a sort of basket-work made by bending boughs with their ends fixed in the earth, for me to thrust my head under to avoid the musketoes or large gnats with which that country is infested. The day following (August 1st)¹³ arrived St. Vincent and Pontiac. The latter gave the former the great belt, forty years old, on which were described two hundred and ten villages. St. Vincent joined us, and we set forward, and arrived at another village of the Ottawaws, the last of their villages we had to pass. One of the chiefs of this village gave me his hand, and led us into the cabin for strangers, where was Katapelleecy, a chief of

¹² A letter to Bradstreet from Morris, dated September 2, 1764, is quoted by Wallace, *History of Illinois and Louisiana under French Rule* (Cincinnati, 1893), p. 352, note.—ED.

¹³ Reference to the date of starting (*ante*, p. 303) shows that this should read September 1.—ED.

very great note, who gave his hand to all my fellow-travellers, but not to me. This man was a famous dreamer, and told St. Vincent that he had talked with the great spirit the preceding night; and had he happened to dream any thing to my disadvantage the night I lay there, it had been over with me.¹⁴ The Indian who gave me his hand, went into the upper range of beds, and came down dress'd in a laced scarlet coat with blue cuffs, and a laced hat. I wondered more at the colour of the cloaths than at the finery; and was told that it was a present from the English, and that this Indian had conducted Sir William Johnson to Detroit.¹⁵ The next morning (2d) he told me the English were liars; that if I spoke falsehoods he should know it, and asked why the General desired to see the Indians at Detroit, and if he would cloathe them. I assured him that the General sought their friendship; and gave him, at his own request, a letter of recommendation to him. We then continued our route towards the Miamis country, putting our baggage into the canoes, but the greater part of us went by land, as the water was so shallow, that those who worked the canoes were frequently obliged to wade and drag them along. We met an Indian and his wife in a canoe returning from hunting; and bought plenty of venison ready dress'd, some turkeys, and a great deal of dried fish for a small quantity of powder and shot. The following day (3d) we were over-taken by Pontiac's nephew and two other young Ottawaws, who, with the Chippawaws before-mentioned, made the party twenty-four. We met an

¹⁴ On the influence of dreams over the actions of Indians, see Long's *Travels*, vol. ii of this series.—ED.

¹⁵ The journey of Sir William Johnson to Detroit, here referred to, took place July 4—October 30, 1761. For the diary of this voyage, see Stone, *Life and Times of Sir William Johnson*, ii, pp. 429-477.—ED.

Indian who, as we afterwards found, had been despatched to Pondiac with belts from the Shawanese and Delawares; but he would not stop to talk to us. This day I saw made the most extraordinary meal to which I ever was or ever can be witness. Till these last named Indians joined us we had killed nothing but a very large wild cat, called a pichou,¹⁶ which indeed was very good eating: but this day we eat two deer, some wild turkeys, wild geese, and wild ducks, besides a great quantity of Indian corn. Of the wild ducks and Indian corn we made broth; the Indians made spoons of the bark of a tree in a few minutes, and, for the first time, I eat of boiled wild duck. When we marched on after dinner, I could perceive no fragments left. What an Indian can eat is scarcely credible to those who have not seen it. Indeed the Frenchmen, who had been used to savage life, expressed their astonishment at the quantity which had been devoured. The next day (4th) we found plenty of game, having sufficient time to hunt for it, as the canoes were for the greatest part of the day dragged along, there not being water sufficient to float them. The day after (5th) we met an Indian on a handsome white horse, which had been General Braddock's, and had been taken ten years before when that General was killed on his march to Fort du Quesne, afterwards called Fort Pitt, on the Ohio. The following day (6th) we arrived at a rocky shoal, where the water was not more than two or three inches deep, and found a great number of young Indians spearing fish with sticks burnt at the end and sharpened; an art at which they are very dexterous; for the chief, who steered my canoe with a setting-pole (no oars being used the whole way), whenever he saw a fish, used to strike it

¹⁶ Pichou is the Canadian name for the loup-cervier, or *lynx canadensis*.—ED.

through with his pole, though the end had been blunted and made as flat and broad as a shilling, pin it to the ground, then lift it out of the water, and shake it into the boat. I never saw him miss a fish which he took aim at. The day after, on the seventh of September, in the morning we got into easy water, and arrived at the meadow near the Miamis fort, pretty early in the day. We were met at the bottom of the meadow by almost the whole village, who had brought spears and tomahawks, in order to despatch me; even the little children had bows and arrows to shoot at the Englishman who was come among them; but I had the good fortune to stay in the canoe, reading the tragedy of Anthony and Cleopatra, in the volume of Shakespeare which the little chief had given me, when the rest went on shore, though perfectly ignorant of their intention, I pushed the canoe over to the other side of the river, where I saw a man cutting wood. I was surprised to hear him speak English. On questioning him I found he was a prisoner, had been one of Lieutenant Holmes's garrison at the Miamis Fort, which officer the Indians had murdered, a young squaw whom he kept having enticed him out of the garrison under a pretext of her mother's wanting to be bled. They cut off his head, brought it to the fort, and threw it into the corporal's bed,¹⁷ and afterwards killed all the garrison except five or six whom they reserved as victims to be sacrificed when they should lose a man in their wars with the English. They had all been killed except this one man whom an old squaw had adopted as her son. Some years afterwards, when I lay on board a transport

¹⁷ Holmes had warned Gladwin of the conspiracy among the Indians; nevertheless, he himself fell a victim thereto. See Parkman, *Conspiracy of Pontiac*, i, pp. 189, 278.—ED.

in the harbour of New York, in order to return to Europe, Sir Henry Moore, then governor of that province,¹⁸ came to bid me adieu, and was rowed on board by this very man among others. The man immediately recollected me; and we felt, on seeing each other, what those only can feel who have been in the like situations. On our arrival at the fort, the chiefs assembled, and passed me by, when they presented the pipe of friendship; on which I looked at Godefroi, and said: “Mauvais augure pour moi.” A bad omen for me. Nor was I mistaken; for they led my Indians to the village, on the other side of the water, and told me to stay in the fort with the French inhabitants; though care had been taken to forbid them to receive me into their houses, and some strings of wampum, on which the French had spoken to spare my life, had been refused. We wondered at this treatment, as we expected that I should be civilly received; but soon learned that this change of temper was owing to the Shawanees and Delawares, a deputation of fifteen of them having come there with fourteen belts and six strings of wampum; who, in the name of their nations, and of the Senecas, declared they would perish to a man before they would make peace with the English: seven of them had returned to their villages; five were gone to Wyaut [Ouiatonon]; and three had set out the morning I had arrived for St. Joseph;¹⁹ (a fortunate circumstance for me, for they had determined to kill me). The Shawanees and Delawares begged of the Miamis either to put

¹⁸ Sir Henry Moore was the only colonist appointed governor of New York, having been born in Jamaica in 1713. After serving as governor of that island, and by his bravery and wisdom averting serious peril during a slave insurrection, he was rewarded with a baronetcy and the governorship of New York (1764). He filled this position with acceptability, dying at his post in 1769.—ED.

¹⁹ For these forts, see Croghan's *Journals*, *ante*.—ED.

us to death (the Indians and myself) or to tie us and send us prisoners to their villages, or at least to make us return. They loaded the English with the heaviest reproaches; and added, that while the sun shone they would be at enmity with us. The Kiccapoos, Mascoutins, and Wiatanons, who happened to be at the Miamis village declared, that they would dispatch me at their villages, if the Miamis should let me pass. The Shawanees and Delawares concluded their speeches with saying: "This is the last belt we shall send you, till we send the hatchet; which will be about the end of next month (October)." Doubtless their design was to amuse General Bradstreet with fair language, to cut off his army at Sandusky, when least expected, and then to send the hatchet to the nations: a plan well laid; but of which it was my good fortune to prevent them from attempting the execution. To return to myself: I remained in the fort, and two Indian warriors (one of whom was called Vifelair) with tomahawks in their hands, seized me, one by each arm; on which I turned to Godefroi, the only person who had not left me, and cried out to him, seeing him stand motionless and pale: "Eh bien! Vous m'abandonnez donc?" Well then! You give me up? He answered: "Non, mon capitaine, je ne vous abandonnerai jamais," No, my captain, I will never give you up; and followed the Indians, who pulled me along to the water-side, where I imagined they intended to put me into a canoe; but they dragged me into the water. I concluded their whim was to drown me, and then scalp me; but I soon found my mistake, the river being fordable. They led me on till we came near their village; and there they stopped and stripped me. They could not get off my shirt, which was held by the

wrist bands, after they had pulled it over my head; and in rage and despair I tore it off myself. They then bound my arms with my fash, and drove me before them to a cabin, where was a bench, on which they made me sit. The whole village was now in an uproar. Godefroi prevailed with St. Vincent, who had followed us to the water-fide, but had turned back, to come along with him; and encouraged Pondiac's nephew and the little chief's son to take my part. St. Vincent brought the great belt, and Pondiac's nephew spoke. Nanamis, an Indian, bid Godefroi take courage, and not quit me. Godefroi told le Cygne, a Miamis chief, that his children were at Detroit; and that, if they killed me, he could not tell what might befal them. He spoke likewise to le Cygne's son, who whispered his father, and the father came and unbound my arms, and gave me his pipe to smoke. Vifenglair, upon my speaking, got up and tied me by the neck to a poft. And now every one was preparing to act his part in torturing me. The uſual modes of torturing prisoners are applying hot ſtones to the foles of the feet, running hot needles into the eyes, which latter cruelty is generally performed by the women, and shooting arrows and running and pulling them out of the ſufferer in order to ſhoot them again and again: this is generally done by the children. The torture is often continued two or three days, if they can contrive to keep the prisoner alive fo long. Theſe modes of torture I ſhould not have mentioned, if the gentleman who advised me to publish my journal, had not thought it neceſſary. It may eaſily be conceived what I muſt have felt at the thought of ſuch horrors which I was to endure. I recollect perfectly what my apprehenſions were. I had not the ſmalleſt hope of life; and I remember that I conceived

myself as it were going to plunge into a gulf, vast, immeasurable; and that, in a few moments after, the thought of torture occasioned a sort of torpor and insensibility; and I looked at Godefroi, and seeing him exceedingly distressed, I said what I could to encourage him: but he desired me not to speak. I supposed that it gave offence to the savages, and therefore was silent; when Pacanne, king of the Miamis nation, and just out of his minority, having mounted a horse and crossed the river, rode up to me. When I heard him calling out to those about me, and felt his hand behind my neck, I thought he was going to strangle me out of pity: but he untied me, saying (as it was afterwards interpreted to me) I give that man his life. “If you want meat (for they sometimes eat their prisoners) go to Detroit, or upon the lake (meaning go face your enemies the English) and you’ll find enough. What busineſs have you with this man’s flesh, who is come to speak to us?” I fixed my eyes steadfastly on this young man, and endeavoured by looks to express my gratitude. An Indian then presented me his pipe; and I was dismissed by being pushed rudely away. I made what haste I could to a canoe, and passed over to the fort, having received on my way a smart cut of a switch from an Indian on horseback. Mr. Levi, a Jew trader, and some soldiers, who were prisoners, came to see me. Two very handsome young Indian women came likewise, seemed to compaffionate me extremely, and asked Godefroi a thousand questions. If I remember right, they were the young king’s fifters. Happy Don Quixote, attended by princesses! I was never left alone, as the wretches, who stripped and tied me, were always lurking about to find an opportunity to stab me. I lay in the house of one L’Esperance, a Frenchman. The next day

my Indians spoke on their belts. The two wretches still fought an opportunity to kill me. The day following the Miamis returned their answer: "That we must go back;" shewed the belts of the Senecas, Shawanee, and Delawares; gave my Indians a small string of white wampum; and told them: "to go and inform their chiefs of what they had seen and heard." While the council sat I was concealed in L'Esperance's garret, as Godefroi was obliged to attend it. Being determined at all events to get into the Illinois country if possible, St. Vincent and I agreed, that he should endeavour to gain le Cygne and the young king to attend me to Wyaut: but, in the middle of the night, St. Vincent came and awoke me, told me that two Frenchmen were just arrived from St. Joseph, and that the Delewares, who were there, were coming back to the Miamis village. He advised me to send for my chief immediately, and tell him, for his own safety as well as mine, to try to get leave to go away in the morning, (for the Miamis had appointed the next day but one for our departure). This was accordingly done, and leave obtained. I went to visit le Cygne, who told me, "that he would have been glad to have attended me to Wyaut; but that he could not think of leading me to my death: for that there were so many tommahawks lifted up there, that he should have trembled to have gone himself." I gave notes to Pacanne and Pontiac's nephew, setting forth that they had saved my life, and entreating all Englishmen to use them kindly. (Pacanne shewed his paper to Colonel Croghan, when he made his tour through the Indian country, and the Colonel was pleased to bring him to Detroit, and, at a private meeting appointed for that purpose, sent for me, and gave me a very handsome present to lay at his feet). We gave

all our blankets and shirts to those Indians who had done us service; and hearing that the chiefs were in council, and talked of not allowing me to return with my party, but of detaining me prisoner; and my Indians themselves appearing uneasy, having left my money and baggage with one Capucin, a Frenchman, I hurried away about noon, vexed at heart that I had not been able to execute the orders I had received. I gave General Bradstreet's letter for Monsieur St. Ange, the French commandant at Fort Chartres, to St. Vincent, to deliver to that officer; and signed a certificate which he was pleased to put into my hands, specifying that, on many occasions, he had saved my life. Fear lent wings to my Indians this day; and we continued our march till it was quite dark, being apprehensive of an attack. We set out very early the next morning; and as nothing worthy of observation happened, my thoughts were taken up during this day's journey in admiring the fine policy of the French with respect to the Indian nations; of which, from among a thousand, I shall select two remarkable instances, which I mention as not only worthy of imitation, but to wear out of the minds of such of my countrymen as have good sense and humanity the prejudices conceived against an innocent, much-abused, and once happy people; who have as deep a sense of the justice and benevolence of the French, as of the wrongs and haughty treatment which they have received from their present masters. The first of these is the encouragement given by the French court to marriages betwixt its subjects and Indian women; by which means Lewis got admission into their councils, and all their designs were known from their very birth. Add to this, that the French so entirely won their affections by this step, that to this hour the

savages say, that the French and they are one people. The next instance is, the prohibiting the sale of spirituous liquors to Indians, under pain of not receiving absolution: it is what the French call a *cas réservé*; none but a bishop can absolve a person guilty of it. This prevented many mischiefs too frequent among the unfortunate tribes of savages, who are fallen to our lot. From drunkenness arise quarrels, murders, and what not? for there is nothing, however shocking and abominable, that the most innocent of that innocent people are not madly bent on when drunk. From imposing on the drunken Indian in trade, abusing his drunken wife, daughter, or other female relation, and other such scandalous practices arise still greater evils. When such things are done (and they are done) can we wonder that the Indians seek revenge? The ill conduct of a few dissolute pedlars has often cost the lives of thousands of his Majesty's most industrious subjects, who were just emerging from the gloom of toil and want, to the fair prospect of ease and contentment. The following day, while we were shooting at some turkeys, we discovered the cabins of a hunting party on the opposite side of the Miami river; the men were in the woods; but a squaw came over to us, who proved to be the wife of the little chief. Godefroi told her that I was gone to the Illinois country with her son. She informed us that the Indians were not returned from Detroit; and added that there were four hundred Delawares and three hundred Shawanees (as she had been told) at the Utawaw villages, who wanted to go and set fire to that place. We were sure that this piece of news about the Shawanees and Delawares was false, as the Utawaws themselves wanted provisions: but my Indians believed it, and it served to bring them over at

once to my way of thinking, which was, to pass through the woods, and avoid the villages of the Ottawaws. They were all much alarmed, but in particular the Huron of Loretto. This regenerate monster of the church, this Christian savage,²⁰ who spoke French fluently, had the cruelty and insolence to tell me, that as I could not march as fast as the rest, I must take an old man and a boy (both lame) and make the best of my way: that the chief would go with me, and he would conduct the other[s], who were eleven in number, and all able men. I spoke to him with gentleness, and begged that he would not think of separating from us; on which he said something, that I did not understand, in his language which resembles that of the five nations, and of course was understood by my chief, and which vexed him so much, that he told me, "I might go by myself;" but I found means to pacify him. I now told Godefroi, who was of himself so determined, that he would of course go with me. Upon this the Huron gave us very gross language; and indeed such stubborn impudence I never saw. He told the chief that if he suffered me to take my horses with me, we should be discovered, but I obtained the chief's consent to take them a little way. I then proposed going into the wood to settle the distribution of our provisions and ammunition; but the Huron would listen to nothing: so leaving him and his party, confisiting of ten, with my best horse, which he said he would turn loose as soon as he should get a little way further, I struck into the wood

²⁰ One of the earliest Jesuit missions in Canada was to the Hurons, for whom (1673) a village was built at Loretto, ten miles from Quebec, on a seigniory belonging to the Jesuit order. Remnants of the Loretto Hurons are still to be found at the old village. The French had employed these "praying Indians" in their wars; it will be seen that the English were following the same policy.—ED.

with Godefroi, the chief, the old Indian, and the Indian boy; Godefroi and myself on horseback. We went North East from twelve o'clock till two; from two to five we went North; and finding a pool of water, we took up our lodgings there. The next day we continued our route North, North East, being as nearly as we could guess in the course of the Miamis river. We endured great thirst all this day. About three o'clock we reached the swamps, which, by the dryness of the season, might have passed for meadows, and not finding any water, about five o'clock we made a hole, two feet deep, with our hands, (for we had no kind of tool fit for that use) where some tall, broad grass grew; and getting good water, though very muddy, we made a fire, and determined to pass the night by the side of our little well. We travelled in the swamps the following day till half an hour after one o'clock, at which time we came to open woods, having found water in two places on our way; but we could find none when we wanted to repose ourselves at the close of day. We therefore set to work, as the day before, and made a hole four feet deep in a place which must be a swamp in the wet season: but it was three hours before we got a draught of what I might rather call watery mud than muddy water. We were forced from want of water to stew a turkey in the fat of a racoon; and I thought I had never eaten any thing so delicious, though salt was wanting: but perhaps it was hunger which made me think so. We heard four shots fired very near us just before dark; we had a little before discovered the tracks of Indians, and they undoubtedly had discovered ours, and, supposing us friends, fired to let us know where they were. These shots alarmed our chief, and he told me that I must leave my horses behind. I bid Godefroi drive

them to some little distance from us, and let them go: accordingly he went towards the place where we had left them, as if he intended to do so; but, unknown to me, wisely deferred it till morning, hoping our chief would change his mind. This night the chief, seeing me writing by the light of the fire, grew jealous, and asked if I was counting the trees. The next morning the chief being a little intimidated, instead of going East North East, as agreed on the night before, in order to draw near the Miamis river, went due North; by which means he led us into the most perplexed wood I ever saw. He had my compasses, which I asked him for, and wanted to carry about me, as he very seldom looked at it; but this gave great offense, and he told me I might go by myself. In short, he was grown captious beyond measure. In order to please him, we had put his pack on one of our horses; but we were forced to take it off again, as a loaded horse could not force its way through the thick wood we were in. I found such a difficulty in leading my horse (for it was impossible to ride) through this part of the forest, that I called out to the party for God's sake to stop till I could see them, or I should never see them more: at that time I could not be more than fifteen yards behind them. They had hurried on in pursuit of a rattle-snake. The chief now told me again, that I must let my horses go; but Godefroi convinced me, that I could not reach Detroit without them. I therefore resolved, if he persisted, to quit him, to take Godefroi with me, and to kill one of my horses for a supply of food, for we had very little ammunition left, and no provisions. However the chief grew good-humoured by Godefroi's management; and as he now thought himself out of danger, changed his course, going East North East. We

soon got into a fine open wood, where there was room to drive a coach and six. Here we halted to refresh ourselves by smoaking our pipes, having nothing to eat, the old Indian, who always ranged as we travelled on, having found no game that morning. As I had not been used to smoaking, I desired to have sumach leaves only, without tobacco; but, after a few whiffs, I was so giddy, that I was forced to desist: probably an empty stomach was the chief cause of this unpleasant effect of smoaking. Soon after we came into extensive meadows; and I was assured that those meadows continue for a hundred and fifty miles, being in the winter drowned lands and marshes. By the dryness of the season they were now beautiful pastures: and here presented itself one of the most delightful prospects I ever beheld; all the low grounds being meadow, and without wood, and all the high grounds being covered with trees, and appearing like islands; the whole scene seemed an elyium. Here we found good water, and sat down by it, and made a comfortable meal of what the old Indian had killed, after we left our halting-place. We afterwards continued our route, and at five o'clock discovering a small rivulet, which gave us all, and me in particular, inexpressible pleasure, we made a fire by the side of it, and lay there all night. The day following, we crossed the tracks of a party of men running from the Uttawaw villages directly up into the woods, which we imagined to be those of the Huron's party who might have lost their way; as it proved. I laughed and joked a good deal with Godefroi on this occasion; for when the Huron left us, I asked in a sneering manner, "if he had any commands, in case I should get before him to Detroit;" and he answered me in the same tone, "if when you arrive, you don't find me there, you may safely say

that I am gone to the devil." Soon after, to our great joy, we fell into the path leading from the Uttawaw villages to Detroit, and struck into a by-path to avoid meeting Indians; but unluckily stumbled on that which led from the great path to Attawang's village. We met three Hurons on horseback, who told us, that peace was concluded, that the Uttawaws had returned the day before to their villages, and that General Bradstreet was to be at Cedar-Point that night on his way to Sandusky. One of these Indians had been present when I was prisoner at Attawang's village; and though I was dressed like a Canadian, and spoke French to Godefroi to prevent discovery, recollect me to be the Englishman he had seen there. I gave him a letter from St. Vincent to Pontiac which I had promised to deliver. They then took their leave of us; and as soon as they were out of sight, we turned into the great path, and putting our Indians on our horses, Godefroi and I walked at a very great rate. We arrived at the Pootiawatamy village²¹ at a quarter past three, where I had the pleasure of seeing English colours flying. I wanted to avoid the village; but the chief, being very hungry (for we had eat nothing that day) fell into a passion, and asked what we were afraid of. He knew he ran no risk here. I was a little vexed, and mounting my horse bid him follow. I went to the village, where I bought a little Indian corn and a piece of venison; and then Godefroi and I rode on till it was dark, in hopes of reaching Detroit the next day; and finding water, made a fire near it, and passed the night there, having left our fellow-travellers to sleep with the Pootiawatamies; who, as none of them knew me, were

²¹ See Croghan's *Journals*, ante, for note upon the location of this Potawatomi village.—ED.

told by Godefroi that I was gone to the country of the Illinois, and that he growing tired of the journey, and wanting to see his children, was on his return home. The next morning we set out at the dawn of day; and, to save ourselves the trouble of making a raft, took the upper road, though the journey was much longer that way, hoping to find the river fordable, in which we were not disappointed. We travelled this day a great way, and our horses were so much fatigued, that they were hardly able to carry us towards the close of the day. We found fresh horse-dung on the road, which Godefroi having curiously examined, knew that some Indians had just passed that way; and by their tracks he was sure they were before us. He therefore made an excuse to halt for about an hour, endeavouring to conceal the truth from me; but I was no stranger to his real motive. However, about seven o'clock we arrived at Detroit; whence I was fifty leagues distant when I left the Miami river and struck into the woods: and by the circuit I was obliged to make to avoid pursuit, I made it at least fourscore leagues, or two hundred and forty miles. The Huron and his people did not arrive till many days after, and in three different parties. They had lost their way; were obliged to divide themselves into small bodies in order to seek for game; had suffered extremely by fatigue and hunger; one having died by the way, and all the rest being very ill when they reached Detroit. The Huron I imagined would have died. I gave him, as well as all the others, all the assistance in my power; but could not help reproaching him with his barbarity to me, and reminding him, "that the Great Spirit had protected one whom he had abandoned, and punished him who had basely deserted his fellow-warrior." Immediately after my

arrival at Detroit, I sent an express to General Bradstreet, with an account of my proceedings, and to warn him of the dangerous situation he was in, being advanced some miles up the Sandusky river, and surrounded with treacherous Indians. The moment he received my letter, he removed, falling down the river, till he reached Lake Erie: by this means he disappointed their hopes of surprising his army. This army however suffered extremely afterwards, and great numbers were lost in traversing the desert, many of their boats having in the night been dashed to pieces against the shore, while the soldiers were in their tents. The boats were unfortunately too large to be drawn out of the water. The sentinels gave the alarm on finding the sudden swell of the lake, but after infinite labour, from the loss of boats, a large body of men were obliged to attempt to reach Fort Niagara by land, many of whom perished. It is worthy of remark, that, during this violent swell of the waters, soldiers stood on the shore with lighted candles, not a breath of wind being perceived. This phenomenon often happens. Another curious fact respecting the waters of these lakes is, that they rise for seven years and fall for seven years; or in other words, there is a seven years tide. I have read somewhere, that the Caspian sea overflows its banks once in fifteen years. This, however, is denied elsewhere. But, if the former opinion be really the case, as the American lakes and the Caspian sea are in parts of the earth almost opposite to each other, it might be worth while to enquire, whether, when they are at the lowest in one place, they are at the highest in that which is opposite, or both rise and fall at the same time?

The Natchez nation, mentioned in the letter to Pontiac, which he shewed me, and who were blamed by the rest of the Indian army for having fired too soon on the English who were sent to take possession of Fort Chartres by way of the Mississippi river, no doubt did it by design, that the troops might have an opportunity of retreating; for the French had formerly endeavoured to extirpate that nation, and had nearly succeeded in the undertaking, a small number only having escaped the massacre.²² It is not probable such an action could ever be forgiven; especially by savages. This nation have a perpetual fire; and two men are appointed to watch it. It has been conjectured that their ancestors were deserters from the Mexicans who worship the sun.

The Miamis nation, of whom I have spoken so much, and into whose hands I fell after leaving Pontiac's army at the Uttawaw villages, are the very people who have lately defeated the Americans in three different battles; and when the last accounts from that country reached us, they were encamped on the banks of the Ohio, near the falls or cataracts of that river.²³

²² The Natchez War, with its sequel in the Chickasaw campaigns, was the most disastrous series of Indian troubles in the early history of French Louisiana. The Natchez secretly rose, and treacherously massacred the garrison of Fort Rosalie, November 29, 1729. During the two succeeding years Governor Périer twice invaded their territory, and inflicted so severe a chastisement that the nation as such ceased to exist, its remnant taking refuge among the Chickasaws.—ED.

²³ This paragraph was obviously interpolated just before the publication of the journal (1791), for the three different battles to which Morris here refers were those of Harmar's campaign in 1790, when three several detachments of the latter's army were at different times overpowered in the Miami territory. The defeat of St. Clair (November 4, 1791), by the same tribesmen, doubtless was too recent an event for the information to have reached England, and been embodied in a publication of that year.—ED.

It may not be improper to mention, that if I could have completed the tour intended, viz. from Detroit to New Orleans, thence to New York, and thence to Detroit again, whence I set out, it would have been a circuit little short of five thousand miles.

DETROIT, September 25, 1764.



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